

News from Ed Markey

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MARKEY QUESTIONS REACTOR SECURITY MEASURES

Security orders developed with industry behind closed doors

Washington, DC: Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA), a senior Member of the House Energy and Commerce and Homeland Security Committees, today released the following statement in response to press reports that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has issued Orders to upgrade the Design Basis Threat (DBT), the policy used to define the threat that must be protected against, at nuclear reactors:

"It is difficult to comment on a secret Order, developed behind closed doors with the nuclear industry lobbyists without any public input. Rather than undertaking a public rulemaking that could have drawn on the advice of numerous security experts while protecting classified information, the NRC decided to hide behind a cloak of secrecy and take counsel only from the industry it is charged with regulating. While it is my hope that the outcome will be an industry that can be protected from terrorist attacks, my fear is that the process NRC used will not lead to that end."

"I believe that Congress must act to determine the adequacy of these measures, and I call on both the Energy and Commerce and Homeland Security Committees to hold public (and classified, if necessary) hearings on this subject in the near future."

"The security around nuclear power plants must be sufficient to protect families who live in those areas from potential nuclear disasters. But, the NRC orders don't go into effect until October 2004 – three years after 9-11. This is too long for the public to have to wait. Moreover, while the NRC has made some appropriate upgrades to its security requirements, the Orders fall short of what is needed in several critical areas."

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